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The Cathedral

and

Other Poems

by

Martha Gilbert Dickinson

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The Cathedral and Other Poems

THE CATHEDRAL

and

Other Poems

By

Martha Gilbert Dickinson

New York

Charles Scribner's Sons

MCMI

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THE CATHEDRAL

TO

S. H. D

What world-worn truths of satirists or sages,
  Upon our lust for hasty fame, engraft
Such irony, as those sagacious ages
  With slow evolving miracles of craft!

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THE CATHEDRAL

THE SPIRES

AFAR—the spires arise above the dome,
As sure and glad foundations,—ramparts blest!
On which the blue floor of man's longer home,
Youth's heaven, faith's conjecture, rest!

THE CHIMES

VENITE domo Domini !
Ne dormite peccato,
In excelsis laus Deo !
Salus datur homini !

Venite domo Domini !
Nunc audite clangorem !
Ne repellite amorem,
Verum lumen homini !

Venite domo Domini !
Exultate gaudio !
Adorate studio
Christum, donum homini !

. . . . .

Venite domo Domini !
Ne dormite peccato,
In excelsis laus Deo !
Salus datur homini !

THE CATHEDRAL

AGAINST an evening sky of amethyst,
Dim veiled in contemplation reverent,
With sole intent to magnify the Lord,
The bride of heaven on the bridegroom waits.
Supreme the symbol! She doth wait, aware
This too shall pass;—with calm gaze turned upon
The far horizon of the last elect,
Where flaming truth triumphant shall unite
The paling ages of fidelity
In one vast pleasure of the infinite.
Above the plain she towers as the past;
Before whose might the present is a babe;
Nor hath the din of armies, clash of arms,
Crusading legions or invading hordes,
Thirst, pestilence or famine, love or hate,
Avail, to swerve the prophet from the dream.
Blood and oppression, peace and brotherhood
Have sought the potent shadow of her arm;
Within,—distracting wars of faith and doubt
May rack her sore;—smiting the bold exterior
Fierce storms of lashing hail and scourging wind
Harass the valiant parapets in vain;
While lightnings fork among the battled heights

Unheeded as the sunbeam's flattery,
By her in whose stern gifting lies the crown.
Despot of despots! Tyrant of the cross!
Approved of the interminable stars;
Amid whose turret's spiral rhapsody—
Those fragile alleluias carved in stone—
The moonbeam's silver arabesque doth smile,
And o'er whose mailed and militant façade
Flow soft the crocus colors of the dawn.

O torch flamboyant to the unknown God!
From out man's upward vision hither come,
The spirit of a nation brought thee forth,
Conceived by a bewildered love of Him!
A mountain fastness of the soul,—wrought out
Of Nature's inexhaustible resource;
Girded in humble effort, stone on stone,
By myriads of swarthy hands obscure;
Primeval forests did outstrip thy growth—
For generations long delayed,—reared slow
In contradiction, ignorance, and crime—
Profaned by base protection arrogant,
By desecrating mobs destroyed, restored—
Preserved in imperfection, oft abused,
Maligned, misunderstood,—yet never lost
And never wholly wrenched from thy design;
Holding some semblance in thy mighty grace
Unto the patience of Omnipotence.

Blind superstition or clairvoyant faith—
That pilgrim of the soul to the unseen
Serenely walking barren ways, with eye
Less fortified by outward cheer than hope—

By some conviction men have lived and died:
Some fuel in their ardent lineage
Has kept the taper burning through the stress
Of bestial pleasure, bigotry, and greed,
That still the glorious sign in stone prevails!
Mere structured marvel to the casual,
A mediæval relic obsolete:
A vision to the seer,—unto the wise
The landmark on a waste of history:
Refuge and worship unto the devout:
But to thyself,—what art thou to thyself,
Thou rugged chant of universal praise?
As the Creator formed His wilderness,
The sunsets of an arctic solitude,
And misty miracles of tropic seas,
To recompense an infinite delight—
Finite requirement full satisfied;
So man, in turn, reflecting Deity,
Enamoured of creation's glad appeal,
By toils colossal ventured to become
Partaker in creative ecstasy,—
Thrilled by affinities ineffable,
His rocky bastion fling precipitous
From the abysmal depth of his estate,
Sheer rising to eternal consciousness!

THE FLYING BUTTRESS

SO buoyant here,—the stony pinions free,
One dreams that eagle wings shall be unfurled,
To bear her o'er the bright gate of that world
Elijah found,—the hope of prophecy!

THE GARGOYLES

O BEASTS from out the forest of the soul,
What sport of human frailty makes ye grin?
Did cunning hands, grown weary of the throng
Of angel hordes, yield for the nonce to sin—
Give sacrilege her way and fashion ye?
Flaunting your jest at holiness abroad,
What mediæval imps of man's revenge
Are ye? Exórcised in the name of God!

THE PORTAL

O'ERHUNG with masonry, portentous massed;
Whose warding vigilance doth not abate
A chastened welcome unto all who wait
Upon this treasury of ages past,
Where once the hunted fugitive aghast
Fled to God's wrath, escaping human hate—
Above the listless beggar at the gate,
Invites the sanctuary's portal vast.
Beyond the threshold of the open door,
Art's wayward inspirations prisoned be,
Gathered as pebbles on the shifting shore
Of years,—outstretched unto infinity.
Within,—the saints' communion shall restore
The soul, and weary sin find clemency!

THE NAVE

O DIM and holy heart,
Wherein the Lord must take delight to dwell!
O vast and sacred heart,
A near presentiment of love,—thy spell.

With clasped uplifted hands,
An intercession ever unassuaged,
The rhythmic outline stands;
Tho' far beneath, glad pageantry be staged
On glowing floors, whose rare
And full-veined marbles woo the knee;
Mosaics deep and fair
Of agate warm and lapis lazuli!
Thy fragrant winding ways,
Chapel and altar, transept and arcade,
May be for festal days,
For sacerdotal sacraments arrayed:
Thy clustered pillars blend
With bannered ceremonial's decree.
Thy gracile arches lend
Their every sinuous harmony;
The tinted porphyry
From myriads of golden tapers bright,

With murky ebony
And frosty Parian beguile the light.
Still, gathered high aloft
The usufruct of worship, lavished prayer,
Praise and contrition soft,
A lesser Eucharist,—abideth where
Odors of sanctity
Cling close beneath the sloping rafter space:
Vague haze of piety;
The outward seeming of an inward grace.

O dim and holy heart,
Wherein the Lord must take delight to dwell!
O vast and sacred heart,
A near presentiment of love,—thy spell.

THE HIGH ALTAR

A THRONE with King invisible, that stands
For deathless dynasties not made with hands,
Founded on certainty of things unseen,
Whose law is perfect and whose fear is clean.
Whose sovereign majesty doth condescend
Unto the lowliest of them who bend
Far down beneath upon the humblest stair,
Submissive subjects of the altar's care.

THE INCENSE

MUTE prayer too deeply hid to find the lip—
Ascend, ascend that mine may follow thee!
Wraith of a soaring impulse heavenward,
Exhale above all choral ecstasy!
As wordless breath of fragrant wonderment—
Or risen vow in penitential shroud—
Ascend, ascend in soft uplifted flight,
To veil within thy floating cloud
The radiance forbid to human gaze;
Till touched by gleaming wing of seraphim,
Thou art refulgent glory unto God—
The heart's incarnate cherubim!

THE CRUCIFIX

PALE in the trembling candle-light
The wide arms of a crucifix invite!
Before whose passion lifted high,
A prostrate penitent asleep doth lie;
Assured his blessing, for the sake
Of that compassion which doth ever wake,
Whose peace denied the doubting seer
The faithful animal may gather here.

Pale in the trembling candle-light
The wide arms of a crucifix invite!
Joy kneels to triumph over life;
Valor to victory o'er sin and strife;
Grief prays with heavy-laden breath
Unto the power that hath worsted death;
While colder hearts must always see
A man,—upheld by love, through agony.

Pale in the trembling candle-light
The wide arms of a crucifix invite!
The outcast dreads the golden beam
That seeks and finds him, with accusing gleam;

THE CRUCIFIX

The tempted shudder, children fall
  Before the sacred emblem that holds all
Life's legend in the blood-stained hands;
  All that the faith inspires or law demands.

Pale in the trembling candle-light
  The wide arms of a crucifix invite,
While ceaseless adorations rise
  Unto the mystery of sacrifice!

THE ORGAN

HIGH priest to the hurt of the human,
  Confessor of riteless lives,
How weariness rests in thy solace—
  How thy tremblant mercy shrives!

To worship beyond mediation
  Rise the daring chords of bliss,
In a rapture of exhalation
  Breathes the Spirit's holy kiss.

And the woe of existence merges
  Her pang in the triumph flight,
As the breast of the Unseen bending
  Embraces despair in light.

Lone winds of the Mightiest whisper
  Through the soul's each hid recess,
In a swoon of dreamy communion
  The languors of heaven bless.

And the throb of the keys is passion,
  The swell of the pipes is pain,
And the crash of the peal is pardon,
  And peace is the old refrain.

THE ORGAN

How the lame leap glad at the summons,
And the blind forget closed eyes,
The doubter believes at the bidding,
And perchance,—the dead arise!

More than wail of the Stabat Mater,
Or cold Gregorian grim,
Thy reverberant miserere
Cries out of the deep and dim.

Breaking thy heart through the misty awe
Of the vaulted dusk above,
As a shattered alabaster-box
At the living feet of Love!

THE TOMBS

ALAS! Among the tombs of conquerors to find
Alone the monumental permanence of death!
Such footprints do but prove that they are gone—
remind
Of this supreme survivor of our mortal breath.
How human and how sad! In naked memory
Far down the bloody brilliant vista of the past,
Their conjured dust starts up in quick vitality—
Only to shrivel here;—cold sepulchred at last!
Beneath the carven crest of empire blazoned high,
By some dark tryst imperious o'erlong detained—
The kingly libertine, absolved and robed, doth lie;
And poets eternal rhythm find, in dreams
unstained;
While sculptured knights, unquesting, sleep by
idle swords;
And armored heroes in recumbent effigy.
Within her sombre breast each mausoleum hoards
A weight of fame,—a dumb and massive elegy.
Lost ages gossip lightly in the marble line—
So audibly the past seems musing in its sleep,
Almost may one the dreamer from his dream
divine—

As toward oblivion dense the heavy shadows creep
To blur the passive legends by the daylight traced ;
Those mortal seemings ; disinherited by night
Inexorably as the living forms that graced
This fair, dissolving panorama of the light !

THE CONFESSIONAL

DARK sea to which unnumbered rivers flow
To lose their restless freight of woe
And drift unclean;
Canst thou send forth again, dishonor-dyed,
The crystal brook of mountain-side
And lone ravine?

O cold confessional, into whose ears
The Borgia whispered blood, and fears
Of penalty,
Grudging thy cursèd might with starting eyes
And clenchèd fist,—yet all too wise
To braggart thee!

To thee betrayal sobs a wasted joy,
And innocence a light alloy
On timid knees;
Where malice, treason, tyranny defile
The shriven silence with their guile
Of centuries.

The Church with God Almighty hid hath kept
Sin's secret,—brazen or long wept—
Condoned, forgot;
But doth her expiation prove remiss,
Or win her children lasting bliss?
The dead speak not.

THE ROSARY

SYMBOL of hopes and fears;
Doubt stilled, strange tears
Allayed; the wonted sign
Of pledge divine!
The toy of human needs
These helpless beads—
Told in the market-place
With stolid face,
Told when the shadows climb,
At Ave chime,
Told in the hush of night
By sinners light,
Chaplet on chaplet blest
To bribe unrest;
Clasped oft in stark-dead hands
In alien lands.
A sacred heirloom, that at once shall be
God's threat and promise of paternity!

THE SHRINES

ON each bent suppliant below,
The waxen image smiles redress;
Whatever be the muttered woe,
However hungry man's distress—
Immovable it doth bestow
The waxen smile to cheer and bless.

Grimed laborers forsake the throng,
Half numb with toil their bodies fling
'Mid youth unchallenged yet of wrong,
And crones whose fingers stammering
Scarce push the slipping beads along—
And peasant girls with heart of Spring.

Here mothers pray an amulet
For children with wide rolling eyes,
And brows with holy water wet;
Here for revenge the lover cries,—
The courtesan doth half forget
She hath no part in Paradise!

THE SHRINES

To move the Virgin's woman side
  To lenience by fond device,
Lie red-lipped flowers, ribbon-tied —
  Cast at her feet to pay the price
Of piety ; mayhap to hide
  Some sin too dear to sacrifice.

Beneath the candles, baubles strown,
  And votive boats to still wild seas —
Let him observe who would disown
  All virtue in such deities,
Deep hollows in the floor of stone
  Worn by the flesh of pilgrim knees !

THE WINDOWS

HEART-BEAT in colors! Bacchanal of saints!
Archangel smiles,—when fasting nature faints
Beneath the yoke of beauty-banned restraints!

O petals of the great rose uppermost,
Wafted in opal o'er the lifted host
As dazzling raiment of the Holy Ghost!

O burning reds,—and blues of sun-kissed sea,
Dipped off the very waves of Galilee—
And regal purples rich in mystery;

O molten yellows splashed upon the ground
As sunlight tracery,—a garland wound
With threads of rainbow,—hath no Pope e'er frowned

Upon these feasts of sensuous holiness?
Such wine of life to veins vowed passionless?
Dripping from joy's forbidden cup to bless

The sense, and stain the calm white lives' close bud
With glory glints from Virgin robes aflood,
Or tragic crimson of the Saviour's blood!

THE CARVINGS

BURNISHED by Time's propitiating lustre,
Postured in visions of enduring grace—
Angels and druids, birds and fruitage cluster
'Mid waving leaves that lace and interlace.

Pagan and Christian,—sanctified, united,
Hallow their praise in art's glad sacrament;
Ancient and modern here their faith have plighted,
The lotus with the passion-flower blent!

Christ and the twelve, in varied service bending,
Pillars triumphant wreathed in scrolls of love;
Martyrs and saints, ascending and descending;
The crown and cross, the lily and the dove.

Out of the olive and the ruddy cedar,
Out of the sturdy heart of Flemish oak,
The Church shows forth the symbols of her leader
Through patient handiwork of simple folk.

Musing the while on fabled forests wondrous,—
Faint stirring palms by desert zephyr wooed—
Hearing the din of trampling tempest, thundrous—
The carver at his altar sang and hewed.

Lusty of life and sober of endeavor,
  Till evening drowned the day of toil and pride;
Haply the tree be deified forever —
  He sleeps forgotten;—pale and pacified.

THE TROPHIES

LIMP hang the wrested spoils of victory,
Dyed in the fading hue of passing days.
Torn beaks of mouldy ships mute pæans raise;
Strange arms, rust-wrought, and wan embroidery,
Condemned to fame by some spent enemy,
To valor's prowess lift a thousand yeas.
Imperious standards bowed in praise
Of war,—war with its golden panoply!
But what of him who fronts a fiercer horde
Within the walls of Self? Beneath what stars,
Before what patron saint, arrayed and scored
The trophies of his inner fray,—the scars
Of perils past? Shall they not hang restored
As surely as the armature of Mars?

THE FRESCOS

O ITALY, love-mastered Italy!
Out of the ruins of antiquity
Art owes her resurrection unto thee!
Thine be the burning signals all the way
From myth of Sun-god to the Hebrew tale,
Through iridescent gleams of pagan day,
To Sorrow gray, with folded pinions pale.

These walls,—where beauty-haunted hands portrayed
Legends aërial to flash and fade,
In colors of ascetic vision laid—
Reflect in flowing contour, tint and tone,
Faces and forms transfigured as best seemed
From out the world that was the painter's own,
Illumining the task whereof he dreamed.

The story of redemption, page on page,
Is spread,—as feast of sense, or counsel sage,
The open bible of a darker age;
Before whose vivid revelation free,
Oft read by eyes to learning all unused,
The sons of ignorance and pedantry
Are by a common sentiment suffused.

Soft on the glooms angelic halos shine,
Where lustrous visitants of mystic sign
Annunciate a Saviour's birth divine;
Or frowning Judgments sternly satirize—
Distracted stare in admonition grim,
Visage and vesture ill to canonize,
Cleaving rent graves with gaunt extended limb.

Adam's creation, and his shrinking Eves,
Temptations lurking 'mid exotic leaves,
The patriarchal fable interweaves.
Adoring Magi at the manger bed,—
The Master walking careless o'er the sea—
The money-changers from the Temple sped—
The whole bleak path through lone Gethsemane

Up to the white ascension glorified,—
With virtues of Our Lady, here divide
Immortal exaltation, side by side;
Where worldling and Dominican have wrought
In rosy flesh their glowing heaven's Queen,
Hard by transcendent spirits wonder-fraught—
From Patmos of the Buonarroti seen!

Bright-winged hosts clash golden cymbals high,
Round-limbed Sebastians on a Southern sky
With Gabriel's auroral graces vie;
Whose rathe dawn-charm of adolescent youth
Leads meditation from herself astray,
Till as some hooded penitent, the Truth,
Before the sacred lust of such array.

Luminous creatures, bathed in atmosphere,
Wreathed by prismatic aureolas clear—
In an apocalypse of bliss appear.
What necromantic spells doth art dispense!
Bacchus turned saint, in tame and chastened guise,
And Venus, through religion's exigence,
A calm madonna with meek lowered eyes.

Thou, Leonardo, thou and thou alone
Of thine inspired brotherhood, hast shown
The dignity of God enhanced, and known
The human Christ beyond all mastery;
Nor draped fictitious vapors fair about
That upper chamber's bare reality—
Whose fact confounds the falsity of doubt.

Ceiling and chancel, apse and baptistry
Appeal in helpless terms of infancy—
Blazon their love-begotten victory;
Flaunt their vermilion canopies urbane,
Poise phantom seraphs with a wakeful horn,
Nor shall art's apotheosis in vain
Reiterate, interpret or adorn.

O rapt creators of the long ago,
Run fast the world away—or linger slow—
Flush the returning May, or drift the snow—
Our later hearts shall fitly recompense
With proud ascription, gratitude and fame,
Your pigments hued with faith and eloquence,
Your palettes stained with fervor and with flame!

Blest be the eyes, whose smitten vision drew
Such holy-concourse from the upper blue!
No allegory theirs, but witness true
Unto the presence of Divinity
Amid the brief, familiar phase of earth.
Celestial transports ever welcome ye,
Through whose presumption hope still finds
rebirth!

THE CHOIR

AS sunbeams solemnized by arches grave,
Flashed through the nave high triumph from
the Choir!
Uplifting haughty crests of stone across
The vague set boundaries of spirit-world,
A chasm, overspanned with sound.
O wonderful!
Within this sacred solitude of soul
Allured by one lone voice escaped confine,
Or wafted concord of a rapt "amen"—
To wander on, as hesitant to fright
Some shy and tuneful creature of the wood,
Whose silver accents animate the dusk,
Till through sonorous intervals of change—
The living and the dead, near and remote,
All past and present—peace and judgment, swing
With symbol and reality, swept high
In dizzy altitudes of far Beyond!
One surging wail of choristers, of priests
And acolytes;—one flaring flame of gold—
Of sable vestments,—crimson, purple, white—
In chorals threatening, assail and claim
The glory or the pity of a God!

Their last cry thrilling to the lofty vault
As o'er the strings of some Æolian
Harp, it smote upon the vibrant doors of
Paradise; then, downward dripping, passed
Away, as wind among the mountain pines.
For one bare instant leaving agony
And joy, in tortured harmony so wed,
As did forever seem to signify
Heaven tormented by a thought of hell—
And hell for heaven's nearness doubly hell!
  Then by the low antiphonal subdued,
Wave under wave, within the sacristy
The spent recessional doth soft recede;
Where inmost gates of inner hush, upon
The smallest saint be silent drawn—and shut.

THE CRYPT

HER splendor by eternal truth upborne,
Magnificent, infallible, secure—
The fealty of the risen Church is sworn
Unto the sunken crypt her walls immure;

Deep in the buried source of vital things,
Where increase hoards her slow, persistent store,
And growth to unperturbed fulfilment brings,
Unlit of morning and unchilled of hoar.

Within these mazy precincts taciturn,
The persecuted found a hiding-place;
These chiselled labyrinths did oft inurn
The smothered chanting of an exiled race.

As some reclusive band of anchorites
In strict performance of a penance just,
The gloom-girt piers support the massy heights
Above the moulding archives of the dust:

Till pallid torches part the cumbrous shade
To seek the mournful coffers side by side—
Where, crusted o'er with glistening gems, are laid
The sacred bones of the beatified—

THE CRYPT

A trance of metal hues and malachite,
Revealed in fitful gleams of ecstasy,
While dirge and requiem their cadence plight
Unto the cavern's solemn sanctity.

Unshaken by the organ's dominant—
Unsearched by wing of joy, or human cry—
Endure the grim foundations, ministrant
Upon the Lord of Hosts pavilioned high!

THE CLOISTER CLOSE

LOVELY the square of pious green, where silence broods
A gentle confidence in all the mystic past!
Eden of Dean's devotions, Canon's prayers; soft moods
Of sanctified desire,—that vow and rite outlast.
Beneath these arches meditation hovers low—
A melancholy, as of ages long at rest,
And pensive charm of world-forgetting hearts, bestow
An ashen benediction on the dying West.
A serious beauty bathes the clambering rose
Upon the cloister roof, o'er gray walls cut with names
Once dear to daily brotherhood,—whose safe repose
The transient path of Nature, love and life proclaims.
Here pace the placid friars; youthful priests; with ear
Intent unto the lowly voice of conscience' laws,
As wilder hearts outside the sheltered fold, to hear
The scarlet bugle-call to conflict's clashing cause!

Fit only for the passions that to-morrow die—
  Or for the cloister that hath no to-day, is man?
The Summer bird that trills her duty to the sky
  From these unheeding eaves, rejoiceth for a span!
Drugged deep in sweet anointing of the spirit
      balm,
  With happiness secure for errant hopes
      resigned—
Do feet that tread these ways of holiness and calm
  The vaunted "peace that passeth understand-
      ing" find?

OTHER POEMS

A TRIAD

PAIN—that doth steal her own from human
arms,
And bear them out beyond Love's boundary—
Where flesh alone resists her demon claws,
The spirit shrunk to narrow agony.
Grief—at a shining stroke of wayward frost
Wilting old pleasure's garden of delight;
Each hope become a haggard questioning—
Mocked by the morning sun's familiar sight.
And Sin—filling the white sails of desire
With trembling kisses, turning swift to flame,
To burn the siren-haunted wanderers
Down to their blackened hulks of crime and
shame.

O Life,—what safety hath a heart in worlds
Where such a triad mark a sure abyss?
What chance hath man's frail-founded
happiness—
His heaven-set face?
Nay, Love must answer this!

A WARNING

THE way to happiness is through these eyes!
—The path to misery beside it lies;
The road to Dreamland through this crimson gate!
—Whose toll in kisses paid leads oft to hate.
There will be neither light nor voice to guide—
Beware thy steps where destinies divide!
Peril and paradise both beckon thee,
And no man's goal another may decree!

CHARM

TALKING of this,—how could we part?
The liquid glamour on the sea
Rose steadily to flood the heart
In emerald mystery.
Yet were we silent,—as of yore,
Meseems 'twere still a Summer day,
Whose ebbing hours, with us implore
The hastening sunset stay!

ESTRANGED

I LEFT the love-locked harbor of thine heart—
Not wrenched from weed-girt moorings by a sudden tide,
But won by waves that wooed inconsequent the start
Down deep-sea passions no small bark could ride.
Life's current rocked me,—bore me,—swept me out of hail—
An empty soul for cargo; all unsteered; to be
An unguessed derelict 'mid craft that sail
Erect to listed ports;—a waif adrift from thee!
To wreck with all my colors flying at the mast,
Nor sight again that haven of the past.

HIS LETTER

AS Nature wasting for the rain of Spring,
She waited for his letter—over seas,
Long hills lay dusty for her travelling,
The Summer days but bloom-girt travesties!
She waited by the moon, with sightless eyes,
Unbearable her woman's industries,
She waited brave or pensive, womanwise,
For that uncoming voice across the seas.

Weary the while, she lent her ear to catch
The constant rhythm of a neighboring tune,
That clung as bees about a rose-clad thatch,
Piped 'neath her window noon by noon.
Last night she oped the lattice of her heart
And took it in;—to-day, as if to shame
Inconstancy unto the rover's faith,
Across the silent seas his letter came!

HER ANSWER

WHAT would it be to shine as one small star—
Where day ebbs last across the bar
Of gold horizon rim? One small star seen
Through apple blooms of white and green?
With the May crescent moon to lie awake,
Decking the sky for Love's own sake,
Lest the short night fall dark o'er one dear head?
That would be heaven,—the maiden said.

EFFROI D'AMOUR

I SHUT my eyes—so low the heavens leant
  Above my face in his, that nearer bent,—
All past, all future swerving under me,
  Swift faintness of oncoming certainty—
    Then one slow kiss!
My own heart knocking at my side,
  As did some reckless horseman ride
    To outstrip bliss!

A TROTH

I GIVE myself to thee. Do thou control
Passions and powers; mate my woman's soul
Unto thy breast!
Throughout eternity, if God so will —
I give myself to thee,— and marvel still
To be so blest.

THY KISS

SINCE first I stood within the moonlight of thy soul,
Awe-struck, transfigured by thy vision white—
To touch with wondering the cup of life
From thy pure lips, uplifted in God's sight;
All present joy is shamed by that dear sacrament!
Before whose memory all passions pale,
As at the brimming chalice of thy love
Another Parsifal did find the Grail.

MISGIVING

I WOULD not be the mountain outline bold,
To bind the near horizon of your sight—
Though early blossoms roam my rocky steeps,
With singing cataracts and stormy winds,
And white clouds hover close above my heights;
Lest your raised eyes o'er intervening fields
Should beat at last on Love's strong barrier
And sigh for sake of roving prairie space!
Rather the heart of me shall be as light
Upon the crest of endless days; that still,
Changeful yet constant as the circling sun,
Shall range with thee in radiant liberty;
Whose wander-beams no limitation find—
And in whose joy the wheeling seasons go!

ASSURANCE

APPROACHABLE horizons onward flee
Before a love like that of thine and mine,—
Pent of no shelving shore or twilight line
The country of our Song and Poesy!
On wing of dawn and midnight they divine
Within themselves, stars that are worlds; and free
Emotions that are seas; for such there be
Infinite spaces—to be filled and shine
By selfhood's inmost revelation proved;
Ascended passions shriven of all pain;
Infinite nearness,—oft to be removed,
Sufficing dazzled senses to regain
A sure conception of the soul beloved
Beyond all earth or time or death domain!

DENIAL

HIDDEN from thee the trembling of desire,
The woman's weakness, swooning 'neath thine eyes—
If so be lit in thee an altar fire
To some wide flaming dream of sacrifice!
Let passion be of such restraint forgot
That 'twixt thy God and thee, my heart beat not.
Beloved,—step without the holy place;
And I, as some cathedral dim wherein
Thy vows were made, will smile upon thy face,
And know the old ensnaring joys of sin
Through my denial, colder, lesser grow;
Holding the flesh in thrall till slow is born,
Of lonely agony and spirit throe,
A soul — the mated miracle of morn!

IN DREAMS

IN dreams we lost all hindering mortal sway,
Inviolate of dawn,—or fealty sworn by day—
Faithless in dreams!
The loving silence left us side by side—
Beyond the wakeful wastes of longing,—
satisfied,
Faithful in dreams!
Melting and mingling, vanishing and blest—
I scarce remember,—lay your head upon my
breast?
Fearless in dreams;
Nor when we meet so otherwise, forget
How in the formless sorcery of sleep, we yet
Were wed in dreams.

HEAVEN

ONLY to find Forever, blest
By thine encircling arm!
Only to lie beyond unrest
In passion's dreamy calm.
Only to meet and never part,
To sleep and never wake—
Soul unto soul and heart to heart;
Dead for each other's sake!

AT LAST

HAD I but dreamed,—as seers of old, O Love!
Each waste of yellow sand that stayed my feet,
The moors in whose wide solitude I roved,
Far lights of towns through which my pleasure sped,
And risk of savage waves, unhomed, unnamed,
All led to thee!
Had I not run and sailed,
Nor slept, nor hailed light pastime of the way?
How strange! I dallied with the Springtide oft—
Forsook the bypath for the song of men.
Regret? Nay, rather grace to squandered joy,
But for such devious adventuring
Perchance I had not wandered here at last;
Or failing weariness and alien loves,
Had never known that thou imprisoned wert
More dear than all my fellow-revellers;
Whose echoes call me still from thy barred doors—
Those jealous portals of another's heart!
Nor shall my voice disturb thy longing wild,—
Enough to stand within the same small strip

Of sunlight, lying 'thwart the pines at dawn,
The same moon shadow of the Winter dusk:
Thy body and my soul, a sealèd cell
For God, our jailer, to set free at will!

MY DEBT

MY debt to thee is all of life made dear;
Service of day, vision of night
Uplifted to thine own far height.
E'en immortality through thee grows clear,
Since lost in love's world with thee here
I catch the meaning of that flight
Of time, when lost in love's supreme delight
I miss nor self, nor thee, in God's white fear.

AN EARTH-CRY

HEAVEN must hold surpassing bliss
If there shall be no sea—
How could long leagues of joy for this
Compensate you and me?
Heaven must bournes unguessed contain
If there shall be no night;
Would weary spirits not disdain
To win such bondage bright?
If no dear heart beside us dwell
In outworn love of sense,
What mystic spirit parallel
Could fully recompense?
Though there shall be no tears to flow
Nor ever parting be—
And God has promised to bestow
Himself,—eternally!

AT THE LAST

AH Love, with dear untruth deceive
Me not! Nor loose the cord between thy
heart and mine.
Is the time come? Do thou but cleave
Me at one honest word;—death has no anodyne!

TRIUMPH

A TWILIGHT at the morning's flood—
A sharper stricture of the breath—
A slower river in the blood—
So this—so this, is Death.

Now God above be justified!
And living Love my witness be,
That I triumphant leave thy side—
Elect to die for thee!

A raptured vision of thy face—
A nearness—closer on thy breast—
A sudden widening of space—
Then the unbroken rest.

SEED-TIME

THAT pain we hid away last Fall,
That frozen pain beneath the snow—
What? Must it answer robin call
As April rivers overflow?
Did it but sleep entranced, to rise
With this convulsive throb again?
Spring's mercy on the heart where lies
The faithful restless seed of pain!

PASSION WEEK

NOT with the world his passion week he kept,
Nor at the shrine of crumbling martyrs wept;
But met alone his heart's Gethsemane
When May's green radiance mocked his agony.

Then Love first found him, crowned him, bade him drink;
While risen rivers joyful kissed their brink —
Light laughed the outward Spring for victory!
That through her smile his soul might shriven be.

ENVY

OTHERS, O Love, may say good night—
Though we find night alone;
Only forbid our eyes the sight
Of transport once our own!

The winds possess the mountain breast,
The shadows win the stream,
The brooding instinct mates with rest,
As twilight with a dream.

All else may say good night,—save we—
For us nor hopes nor harms.
At homing-time of memory
Christ pity empty arms!

WHOM DEATH DIVIDES

THE broken-hearted cry,
"Death will re-wed our sundered fate—
We too shall die!"
To soothe a fettered mate
Love sighs,—"Death cuts the marriage tie—
Do thou but wait!"

Whom death divides, think ye death will unite,—
Or but forever separate?
Strange human hope that death can both requite!

AFTERWARD

FIRST, with dull sense and empty brain
Watching the swift-receding light,—
Silent, lest voices put to flight
Such memories as yet remain.

Then, a fierce exile of the whole;
Each haunting vision to suppress,
Till only wayward dreams confess
The vital secret of the soul.

At last, return to tasks once dear,—
Forgotten in a golden haze;
And dreams as empty as the days
To prove the Afterward is here.

HOW ill most women reckon men!
To hands fast bound by burdens not their own,
Stretching soft palms; resentful when
That bold fore rank must stand or fall alone.

Her inward look misunderstands
Too oft, the hilltop of his wider view—
Oh that the bird of shadow lands
Would spread her wings between the sun and dew!

Facing the worst, he hopes the best;
Singing he works, while women bid him pray—
The wrong his busy arms arrest
Her faith commits unto a higher way.

Her heart for passion's answer cries
Unto a heart, that for love's sake divides
Delight with duty; be he wise
His soul a secret hid in self abides.

Yet if she knew,—would God she knew!
Through solitude, through folly and through strife,
Her touch keeps that lone spirit true
And hers the gift men part with last,—their life!

LOST AND FOUND

THE one who lost him,—found
An idol,—at whose shrine
Fresh wreaths were ever wound;
Where she did low incline
To swear old vows and pray old prayers.
And she who won him,—lost
A god for mortal man;
Who all her life-lines crossed,
Yet circled in his span
Love's fruit and flower 'mid the tares!
Each woman heart supremely blest,
So satisfied she loved him best.

BENEATH A COWL

I TELL you none love women like a priest!
'Tis they who eat declare how poor food tastes.
While we, with longing never satisfied,
Would buy with blood the crumbs another wastes.

For us no morning's tarnished afterward —
Nor pale fidelity to hearts forsworn,
For us no squandered lust on shrunken form —
Nor jaded patience of reproach forborne.

With bodies bowed before Maria's shrine,
We clasp and loose and love at will, the dream
Unmeasured by reality's lean rule —
Of human love; unknown, unowned, supreme.

Though Death, I know, some night will lift the cowl
The Church imposes on my shaven head,
My hands unfolded grasp their liberty —
Too late! E'en saints in heaven may not wed.

No, love of all earth's women must be ours,
Since vows of chastity deny us one;
My knees grow weary as I kneel to pray —
Ora pro nobis! God's lone will be done.

AT VESPERS

PASSIONATE cadence rising,
Outlet of prisoned hearts—
Whispers the woman thwarted,
To the love of God,—that parts!
Veiled as her Eastern sister
In the languid far harem—
Bowed to her Master's worship
The celibate dreams her dream.
Captive of love's perversion!
The wide world calls in vain
The scented nun of pleasure—
The white-robed nun of pain.

HER EYES

HER eyes are but the pathway strewn with
dusk,
Unto the tropic jungle of her heart;
Where tawny tigers crouch,—and swift still wings
The red hibiscus part!
Her eyes are but the pathway o'er the sea,
To far horizons voyag'd in wind and spray—
Where 'neath the rainbow's yet receding end
I dreamed my treasure lay!
Her eyes are but the hallowed pathway dear,
Down lovely aisles of fragrant mystery—
In that high sanctuary of her soul,
Whose altars gleam for me!

FOR LOVE OF HER

ONE wore a sword upon his side
And followed fierce the love of war,
O'er desert parched and prairie wide—
For love of her!

One wore a cross upon his breast
And prayerful paced a narrow cell,
While erring souls through him were blest—
Beneath her spell!

And one,— another, made no sign,
But worked and sung without demur,
Nor spilled his secret cruse of wine—
The love of her!

Unconscious Mistress! Boon or curse,
Her lovers love her, feel her spur—
And I — have made this little verse
For love of her!

A FACE

NOT beauty in that wayward guise
Compelling praise from youth's swift eyes;
But sacred loveliness thou hast,
Like ruins of a perfect past!

WAITING

THE blood but feebly gropes,
The breathing slows—
The heart still hopes
Although the head well knows
He will not come!
Listen! Now pulsing bold
Hope's own false morn
Leaps hot,—sinks cold;
Must Joy's child be still-born?
Down fades the waning light—
Despairing grown
Each wild sweet fright
Leaves one at last alone.
At footfall of the rain
Hope joins the race
With fear again;
Echoes the wind's swift pace?
Ah no! Among the vines
Both wind and rain,
As day declines,
Mourn Love's long watch in vain.
He will not come!

WAITING

Ah God! He comes, He comes!
Darkness is bliss
Beyond the sun's
For sake of one hot kiss!
Go day! He comes!

A FALLACY

PITY for Omar!
Whose pale accents spell
That "I myself am heaven or hell"!
Who in no dearer self hath e'er discerned
A heaven transfigured, or a hell that burned!

JOY

HAIL! Hail Joy,
The wild glad terror of Joy!
Shaking the tense under-strings of the heart,
Tearing the nimbus of sorrow apart,
Spring's torch-winged madrigal boy! Hail Joy!
The reveller Joy!

Hail! Hail Joy,
Thy kisses are stinging and sweet!
Herald of hovering sky-dreams above,
Drunk of thy height as of wine or of love,
Life reels 'neath thy luminous feet! Hail Joy!
Delirious Joy!

Hail! Hail Joy,
Keen on the breast as a sword!
Smiting the blood to a race with thine own,
Till the spirit shouts as a trumpet blown
At the pagan lips of a god — "Hail Joy!
Hosanna to Joy!
Hail lover of passions and pleasures!
Of raptures and tremors and measures
Illusive, and shadow embraces!
Hail playmate of satyrs and sunbeams
and graces!
Hail vagrant celestial! Hail Joy!"

TO MUSIC

THOU more than love, that lingers but to die;
Thou more than life, that swift is born again!
Thou poppy witch whose brew releaseth pain,
Whose breath is sweeter than the lotus sigh!
Thou queen of gypsy hearts and fancies shy,
Of loves untried and undreamed seas long lain
At flood of ecstasy, where thou dost reign
A moon of passion in supremacy!
Thou Circe of men's buried souls, who leap
To break their cerements cold at voice of thee,
Bolder than spells of old magician sleep
The glad illusion of thy wizardry!
Vestal or temptress, all thy slaves to keep,
Angel or criminal thou makest me!

THE BAND

THE band all pitiless sought out my heart—
Though pleasure ran atlaunt among the horns,
A vibrant misery did naked shrink
Beneath her fiery footstep shod with thorns.
The steady drum, as some old duty dulled
Barbaric raptures kindled in her track;
However clamorous the fanfare soared,
A wailing under-cry did snatch me back
To earth,—where passion sank to pain of nerves
Excited to the quick; the flesh undone
Amid the tyrannous debauch of sound,
Those swooning melodies that kiss and stun!

As one who buried comrades,—youth and joy,—
And with his jaded regiment did hear
Th' accustomed quickstep o'er the lonely grave,
To check with mockery a mortal fear,
I follow on behind the band! Now 'tis
Within my breast,—the heart-beat of the drum;
Now 'tis the brass that strikes me down; before
Whose bloodless bayonets swift overcome,
The deadened senses yield their last defence,
And for escape I lift a craven hand;
"Dear God! forbid not hell's just wage of flame,
But unto me, a sinner, spare the band!"

TRISTAN AND ISOLDE

SWIFT to each other they rush blindly on—
Like two triumphant breasted waves, that sweep
In glad green curling pagan joy upon
The curbless impulse of an unknown deep,
Until their goal tumultuous is won.
Passionate breakers that must run and leap
To meet the doom for which their beauty shone;
Exultant victims of relentless neap,—
Ah treachery! 'Tis done; they blend, they break!
And heartless seas of being drink again
The gleaming crests athirst to flow as one;
While glittering across their shattered wake,
A mere forgetful flood of shapeless main—
Mocks the cold splendor of a rising sun!

MUSICIAN TO POET

SPARE me one night! One soft dark Summer night
Beloved of moth and wakeful flaring flower,
When the young moon is set, and drenched with dew
Belated night winds nest in yielding leaves—
Of all you give to sleep, choose one for me!
Not for surcease, or idleness, or vain
Desire, I pray,—but that mere music have
Her disembodied way with man and poet,
Until his breath be sweet for sake of her,
And through his future singing well she may,
As wild Undine, find her human soul.
Steal one strange hour from dream's bewilderment,
And one, more passionate, from tears, and one
From flashing tarns of memory, and more
From those hushed shadows of oblivion,
Whose cliffs jut eastward in the seas of dawn—
Where none shall miss you if you never come;
Then, with the silence close infolding us,
For one short Summer night but let me play!

MUSICIAN TO POET

Release the tidal harmonies that flow
Across our thirsty being's thwarted course;—
All Love's acceptance of her fierce duress;
All Power's self-destroying impotence;
Glories of Terror! And the undertones
Returning oft and over to caress
With sonnet intricacy, dear to sound;
The lyrics never taken on our lips—
The epic prisoned in heroic chords—
  Till Day return, in jealousy to rouse
Her glad monotony of birds and chide
Us spirit wanderers, and set our feet
Upon the level rhythm of steady spheres!

À TA VOIX

A SOB, a sigh, a whispering —
A cry of bird on beating wing —
A fragrance wafted off a rose —
A thrill, a throb,— as dreaming knows!
Now from the rose her love-sweet leaves are falling
The echoes of all singing faint depart,
Across the night give ear unto her calling,
"Thy voice hath kissed the petals off my heart!"
A sob, a sigh, a whispering —
A hint of passion on the wing —
A crimson tremor from the rose —
Good night! Good-by! So dreaming goes.

DÉSIR

WERE I some little melody,
I'd leave the keys
And trembling bow my head upon your knees;
Were I a song, no lips but yours
My life should take;
Were I some mighty chord, I'd break
From master hands to shock your heart awake!
Were I one high pure note with heaven for goal,
I'd die of joy to rise within your soul.

TO A VOICE

O HEART, sang thou thyself to me,
Or all mine inmost depths to thee?
Becalmed upon thy voice I lie,
Who drown and listen,— thine for aye!

Yet there is more to sing,— oh more!
The fleetest frigate off sleep's shore,
In thy most seaward-going dream,
Shall bear thee less of Merlin gleam,

Than mystery and charm and pain
That wait thy call,— nor wait in vain —
Where love doth wake in woman's eyes
To greet thy passion's crimson skies!

O Love, thy waves leap over me —
Far out upon their harmony,
Becalmed upon thy voice I lie,
Who drown and listen,— thine for aye!

THE GOD OF SONG

THE God of Song — of song impassioned, tense
and low and love-distilled —
Of song supreme, aflame, heroic; the God of
Song desire-filled,
Lifting his voice above the uncleared wilderness
of ecstasy,
Circled a heart with ambient fire!
E'en as Wotan, charmèd he
His own,— from all sweet sounds or tender,— pity
or sobs or laughter —
Murmurs of men or threat of thunder; doomed
it forever after
To beat alone unto the rhythmed memory of his
delight;
While as the guardians of his spell, flash Orphean
echoes bright!

A SOUL TO A VOICE

O THOU divine intruder,
Who through the life-blood stole
To spurn the heart's old highway,
And haunt a ravished soul!

Thy wings part soft my breathing,
And where thou seekest rest,
No other e'er shall venture
Till Death explore my breast.

Within my inmost being,
Where only God may go—
What bliss to trust thy spirit
To tremble to and fro!

A LOVE-SONG

I LOVE thee as a wild bird loves the sky—
Her silent radiant heaven of flight!
Breaking her heart in song for thy delight,
High o'er the world, to glad thee and requite
Her silent radiant heaven of flight.
I love thee as a wild bird loves the sky!

I love thee as a wild bird loves the sky!
'Neath cottage eaves when swallows drop to rest—
The roaming gull on sea-girt crags may nest—
The eagle deem her sullen eyrie best—
'Neath cottage eaves when swallows drop to rest
I love thee as a wild bird loves the sky!

I love thee as a wild bird loves the sky!
Far, far below—for her nor nest nor mate,
Her wings will never droop,—in vain they wait—
The sunset fires of dying day, her fate;
Far, far below—for her nor nest nor mate,
I love thee as a wild bird loves the sky!

THE VOICE OF ISRAFEL

ISRAFEL calls her from his upper white!
Swift torn the mesh that held her fluttering—
Forgot the snare that lured her beating wing—
Israfel calls her with his song of light!
Once more her pinions cut her native air
To bear her as a spirit soaring, where
Israfel calls her from his radiant height!

TO PAIN

DEAR human Harp, why must God's hand attune
Thy passioned strings, celestial-keyed, to pain?
Did the old marvels of the sun and moon,
Of love and joy, smite on thy breast in vain?
From anguish only is the ravishing
Of strains unheard, Keats vaunted sweetest far,
And thou, the chosen instrument to sing
The lonely rapture of his spirit's star?
No voice within thy chord, from discord wrung,
Hath Joy;—submerged, forgot—her siren lute
Borne by small Loves, with roses overhung;
The slow vibrations of her heart are mute
When high o'er blade of bliss thy notes arise
Mid pain-taught nightingales of Paradise!

AN ECHO OF THE ORCHESTRA

THE footfall of the cellos 'cross my heart,
The wood-wind as it listeth wandering—
The zenith flight of vibrant violins
That raise the eyes to Summers of delight;
The losing self on streams of harmony,
Whose curving currents lap the senses round
Till surging maelstroms seize them,—hold them strong
Against a swift chromatic undertow;
While from the massing cloud of tone sustained
Elusive lightnings shimmer from the harp—
The horns deplore—the viols importune—
O'er whose ascendant cadences prevails
The chaos of the cymbals and the drum!
Not Love itself is so possessed of Spring,
To overflow the sunken shore of life
And lift a gleaming flood to nameless stars,
As this Slavonic wooing of the brass,
Or this enamoured mating of the strings!

CLIMAX

DEAD at the climax!
Music, color, love,
Mounting in triple blazoned majesty;
Gift of the Gods all other gifts above,
So fell the golden Greeks of tragedy!
Now, while the trumpets knock upon the gates;
Now, while the crash of brass intoxicates!
Dead at the climax! This is victory!
His overturnèd chariot wins the race,
As Death's voice sweeps the field where mortals
flee,
And hoarse with blood-stained triumph cries,
"Give place!"
Dead at the climax! While with life elate,
Dead at the climax! O supremest fate!

INACTION

UNTO the soldier nursed by murder's breath,
More terrible than cannon roar or death—
The bloodless waiting on a foeless field,
Where Night and Peace lean low on double shield.

THE WATCHER

FROM towered battlement I sweep the plain,
And smite the heights of hope with eager cry—
Who wears the crown? Who lie among the slain?
No harbinger as yet against the sky.

The future sleeps in night's dark hostelry;
A watcher lone, I sound my bugle-call
To speed the chance—whate'er the tidings be—
With soul erect though coward strongholds fall.

The echo wafts no signal from the breeze,
Each wakeful star a sentry's challenge gleams;
Behind me are the silent certainties,
Around me rise the silver mists of dreams.

God of the plain, what bidding wilt Thou send?
Again in vain I scan the dim highway—
Shall sword or sceptre mark the vigil's end?
God of the hills, art Thou for peace or fray?

At last! Across the ridge I see him leap
And fly on wing of light unto my gate;
Hail, runner Day! Well spurned the fields of sleep,
Thou dauntless sun-clad servitor of fate!

THE WATCHER

Put off thy sandals, while, with bars flung wide,
I meet thy weal or woe on bended knee.
Hail, runner Day! whatever may betide
From out the regal hand of destiny.

BEFORE THE BATTLE

WHEN as a hero he must meet grim hordes,
Relentless nerve him on to victory!
Kindle the naked flash of hostile swords,
Those blades that lust for such as he!
Speak not of pity or of coming peace,
Nor stay him up on strains of sympathy;
Admit no chance of unforeseen release,
Nor soothe with balms of memory;
But sharper press the combat's exigence,
Measure the certainty of overthrow,
Bid him God-speed, each muscle strained and tense;
Trust him the more if desperate the foe!

"THE WORLD FORGOT"

NOT cloistered saints, that bid the world
Remember they forget — its lure defy,
Whose abnegating robes accost the glance
Of lost humanity;
Not they whose moving lips attest
Repeated prayer, to shame the throng or mart,
Are Thy swift followers alone,
Sweet Christ! Unveiled, untonsured, they there be
Who hold their miry brothers to their heart,
Even for love of Thee,
Who didst remember to the end
Thy world, though they had Thee forgot and fled —
A hillside Calvary Thy holy lot,
Mountain and sea Thy bed.

A LAST APPEAL

WHAT wilt Thou of me, Lord?
Whom Thou hast made
To dumbly sit beside the cottage door,
Entered and passed by lusty traffickers
Of work and joy,— even as I of yore.
What wilt Thou of me, Lord?
Too weak to toil,
Too hoarse to sing,— with eyes that fail to greet
Beyond the shadow of a sheltering wall.
Life clotted thick against the heart's frail beat,
Misshapen to the avariee of youth,
And shattered by strange forms of suffering,
Left fumbling at the latch of Thine intent,
A contradiction of returning Spring.
What wilt Thou, Lord,
With this dull image of
Thyself,— this mere obstruction in the path?
A symbol of long patience unto men,
Or sign of wrath?

L. of C.

THE VIGIL

WHILE others slept,— a soul leaned o'er the
wilderness of night;
Past faith in God,— aloof from human love; with
sight
For one void instant bared unto the ice-lit North,
to guess
At man's design and some hid certainty possess.
Renouncing all save self,— from out that lone
sublimity
It gathered Godhood; saw itself unmasked, to be
A matchless entity; for fear, and life and death to
dread!
Then the clairvoyant solitude of terror sped.

THE DOUBTER

WHY wilt thou haunt me thus, O thought of God?
Leave me my doubt unwakened by thy dawn;
Desire disowns thy love or chastening rod—
Night is for revel, day for rest. Begone!
My heart seeks not forgiveness or to share
Thy searing mysteries; leave me to doubt.
Art thou still near? I feel thy presence dare
My bravest mocking,—track my silence out.
What if my truest doubt did but blaspheme?
God! Were I saint,—or fiend to bid thee go!
That I believe, O Heaven, let me dream—
Or from thy fear let doubt a respite know!

A CRADLE-SONG OF FAITH

SLEEP well, young Faith, sleep well!
Doubt shall not raise o'er thee his ugly head,
Doubt is forever dead
To thee,—so rest thee well!
Sleep well, calm Faith, sleep well!
Within thy dreams the shepherds saw a star,
Follow its pathway far,
So with thee all be well!
Sleep well, tried Faith, sleep well!
Rise brave begirt when Dawn shall call
Her certain warriors; thou shalt not fall.
The night is short; sleep well!
Sleep well, old Faith—'tis well
With thee! Old Faith shall young awake;
Love, Hope nor Destiny their promise break!
Sleep well, old Faith, sleep well.

PERVERSION

A SHIP that drowns, ingulfed by waves on
which it sped ;
A sword with rust upon the blade ;
A brain where past creations hover o'er their dead ;
A trustful heart through love betrayed.
Let us die comrades, on the wave,
Our swords drawn keen,
Our brains alive the land to save,
Our love still clean !

JUDGMENT

SIN crouching cried,
"Behold a serpent with a flaming tongue, that doth deride
Me at the gate that spans my pathway wide!"

"Ah, blessed eyes!"
Cried Purity,—"an angel at the door of Paradise!
Unto her lilies white my spirit flies!"

A PRAYER

FOR sin long ages since begun,
From father's father unto son,
For pride inborn, and careless wrong,
For lust of life when youth beat strong,
Forgive, O God—remorse is long!

For sin through bleak discouragement,
For sin with better motives blent,
For others' sake, in love's dear stress,
But most for sin through loneliness,
O God, forgive—forgive and bless!

BEWARE AN EMPTY HEART

I DROVE out hot desire,
I put my love away,
I burned my gods in fire—
What host shall I obey?

I dare not brave delay,
Lest old charms o'er me throng—
An Orpheus swift, I pray!
To dull the siren's song.

Bring sweeter airs for sweet!
Bring wider dawns for day!
Void hearts enticing beat
To homeless lusts alway.

LIFE'S SCHOOL

IN life's strange school I heard Pain call my
name,
And prayed to be excused;—no answer came—
A childish lesson just a moment long,
A sigh, a tear, instead of my old song—
Then sterner tasks were set me o'er and o'er;
At last I stood beside the open door,
A master of the laws of grief; proud borne
As jewels by some stately order worn.
Only one mighty test was left: to hear
Another called, whose name, of all names dear,
Left courage weary, strength of no avail,
And smote rebellious blood to cheeks long pale;
The crucifixial hour bids me depart,
And claims submission for a dearer heart!

IN HIS IMAGE

THE starry heavens brokenly reveal
Their beauty when on tossing waves outspread ;
As warring hearts the face of God conceal,
That lies reflected on our tranquil dead !

WHAT THE GULL HEARD

THE FIRST BOAT

OH to be out on the open sea!
Bride of the waves and veiled in their foam!
Rotted the beam and the sail will be—
Anchoring here at home.

THE SECOND BOAT

Oh to be over the harbor bar!
Safe from the perils that crash and yawn;
Tattered in shroud and mangled in spar,—
I shall go down ere dawn!

SOUNDING

AWHILE delayed the voyage on life's high
sea—
That hearts may gauge the drownèd deeps
below;
Slow days of sounding—unto which men owe
The wreckage saved, and course of victory!

RESTRAINT

AS ocean, drawing back too restless tides
That would be wandering beyond worn
boundaries,
Feels in the tumult, as her turning flood subsides,
The uncurbed longing of her chafing seas;
After a mighty moment, souls draw up their sheath
Of swift reserve; shrinking from conscious
certainty
Of that recurring impulse throbbing deep
beneath—
Resisting fierce all human mastery!

THE INEVITABLE

HE shrank and wondered, cup at lip,
Since joy the brew he counted best;
Then half demurred. "Nay, drink!" quoth
Life—
A cloud hid all the West.

"The cup is deep, the potion strange—
Nor was it meant for me!" he cried.
The darkness fell, but Life remained,
While fierce he strove and sighed.

Thrice raised the cup, thrice let it fall—
No vintage this of Nature's vine!
At last, compelled by Life's strong hand,
He drained the bitter wine.

One groan for boyhood's bubbling spring,
Then,—"If this cup be meant for me,
My manhood at the brim!" he pledged—
Alike the bead and lee.

A DOUBLE GRIEF

THE heel of one supreme, confessed despair—
One sorrow, face to face without relief,
No son of woman could disdain or bear.
Lighter the burden of a double grief!
That he may shift from side to side, and dare
A snatch of song in respite brief.

THE NIGHT-WATCH

MARK you those kindling eyes with love-light brave —
The buoyant step and flash of laughter gay?
Bright burn the bonfires of a human heart,
To hold the wolves of memory at bay!

WASTED

To speak, oft is to raise the lid
Where lifelong treasuries are hid;
To break the glass of loving days
Along the blasphemous highways;
To strip the sacred garlands fair
And leave our highest altars bare,—
Dishonoring the heart's high priest
To spread a moment's idle feast
For faithless eyes and careless ears,
That desecrate the hoarded years!

THE CRY OF A THOUGHT

TOO lately risen from chaotic mind,
With naked consciousness but dimly stirred—
Transfiguration tremblingly divined,
Touch me not yet by breath's defiling word!

Leave me a hidden infancy to haunt
The twilight spaces of the unexpressed;
Nor wrest a gauzy shade to idly flaunt
As misbegotten fancy of thy breast.

My rainbows fade before thy holden eyes,
My harpstrings break upon thy busy loom;
Speech ponderous plods where frail conception
flies—
Must unembodied thought the flesh assume?

THE POET

AT dead of night he melts old joy, old truth, old pain,
Through his new soul, and runs new forms of light;
Till battered jewels, dull and marred, reset again,
Receive new lustre to enchant our sight.

INHERITANCE

JUST as a lordly father might o'erwhelm
A son with full possession of his realm,—
Vineyards of fruitage fair and forests dim,
Streams, friends and sov'reignty once dear to him,—
So Time has toiled since light through chaos ran,
Despoiling each successive age of man
To mass a proud inheritance for thee.
Heir of the nineteenth century!
Art in her ermined pageantry,
And Thought grown deeper than a lone high sea
Lapping the tropic shores of Poesy,
And Music, mistress of the gods — all, all!
The regal subjects of thy listless call.
The blue blood of the ages courses free
Within thy veins; the sphinx waits on for thee.
Shall no new star respond to blue Chaldee,
Whose shepherds scan the sky for prophecy?
For thee law, war and peace did giant strife
Through love and martyrdom to crown thy life.
Barbaric splendor lit the overthrow
Of dynasties forgot, for thee! Then go!
Tear the slow moss away that does but hide
A roll of ancestry whose deathless pride
Is thine! Behold the tombs whose ashes wrought
To earn the kingdoms lightly set at naught!

"JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING"

EVENING, for weariness, draws in
  Unfinished toil, half-hearted play,
Life's armor worn exceeding thin
  By the rough conflict of the day.

Evening leads home from hope's high steep
  Lone flocks of disappointments sad;
Unsatisfied we fall asleep,
  Nor even pray to waken glad.

But in the morning there is light!
  Love's heart against the world beats strong.
Joy breathes across the glooms of night,
  And out of darkness lifteth Song!

Then with the dawn doth valor rise,
  To laugh at all it vowed to bear,
While writ in glory on the skies
  Is answer to the doubter's prayer.

"THINGS UNSEEN"

DAWNS with their dew and midnights burnt
with stars —
Eternal passions that from heaven lean —
New goals that rise along thine inmost heart,
Be unto thee a pledge of things unseen!

CLEARED

WHILE yet in sight, he knew nor saw our faces
straining seaward from the shore;
Hoarsely we hailed, but distance blurred our breath;
signals were shown: we spoke no more.
Framed dark against a stormy sky, his boat was
mutely set for outward-bound;
Baffled by eyes that would not let him go,—until
the trembling world seemed drowned,—
As limitless the vacillant offing, all her shivering
space outspread
Between us and our fading mariner—voyaging
impassive with the dead.

Up, Love! Across wide silences thy valiant
pinions try!
Companion this pale wayfarer, who sleeps
but cannot die.
Thou and the sun shall lead him o'er the
gold horizon line,
Where crimsoning dreams crown dusty duties
—red vintage of a weary vine.

CLEARED

O Death! We stood in shadow of thy great
reality; we could not stay
The craving of dead hands,—too frail for this
world's toil, untaught in that world's play!
Wan captives of thy listless calm,—strangely
disburdened of all mortal cares,
That lay from Fate's cold taffrail dumb outstretched
in listless longing, as faint prayers:
Helpless as old-time tenderness—aloof on thy
remote and wider way,
That flows through incommunicable darkness to
the coast of breaking day!

But wrapped in royal purple of majestic
mystery—
He heard, far out, the shoreless music of his
soul's lone sea.
His earthly neighboring complete, serene he
drifted back;
To him the brotherhood of stars—for us the
courage of his vanished track!

VALE!

NOW let the frosty sentence pass!
For I have garnered asters in my soul,
To blur with sentiment the stolid year
Beyond the largess of their purple dole.
And I have wrung the life-blood from the hours,
Forgot old pain amid the russet wold,
Steeped love in azure and immensity,
And burned regret in scarlet and in gold.
Ventured the circle of the hazel witch,
And claimed of gusty winds bluff brotherhood —
And buried in my heart a rain-wet path
That led to sunset lurid through a wood.
Amid gray embers one hot hope is lit —
A torch unto a royal memory,
And through the benison of dying leaves
Blows my consent unto the chill decree.
Now is all prophecy fulfilled!
Thy rustling footfall, Autumn, bear thee soon
Within the dim, unmeasured hills of Time,
Led by the waning of the hunter's moon!

ZERO

OUT from her lair of night
The Winter day
Draws her cold, shining sides,
To seek her prey.
Peril attends her tread;
Her feet of snow
Pursue the wanderer;
To life a foe.
Her blow is silent struck,
Frost is her breath —
Her eyes flash icicles,
Her trail is death.
Slow to her covert dark
She slinks away,
Summer's hot huntsmen still
Holding at bay.

THE RAIN

NO joy for her in towns — no blessing of the ground
Or gratefulness of beast! The heedless traffic drowned
Her voice, and towered walls destroyed her headlong fall;
She missed the sound of rivers rising to her call,—
The open fields,—in wandering the path of men,
Fretted by paltry bar and narrow hindrance. Then,
Finding small welcome and no love to greet her there,
Cheated of joy, this wilful comrade of the air
Forsook the iron-hearted town and ran to find
The sea — leaning aslant the rough arm of the wind,
That tossed the ships to harbors of his whim, and tore
The waves from their deep courses, driving them offshore
Till leagues of reeling fathoms gathered to their rout.
High o'er the din of roaring breakers blew the shout

Of wilder hurricanes with black wings wide in
flight;
Only the stars escaped the tumult of the night —
While unrestrained in space she wreaked her
stormy glee
In tempest carnivals with frenzied wind and sea!

THE MARSH

SHE braids her hair of brown
With ribbons of the sea,
And all the lands lean down,
Approach, on bended knee.

Her cheek with dawn is flushed,
Horizons tremble there;
Through years of nights deep hushed,
The stars have found her fair.

The sea-gull's brigand breast
Is never false to her,
The distant tide's unrest
Her sunburnt mem'ries stir.

Her soul is in midstream;
She listens — till she hears
The waves brim o'er her dream,
As jealous Ocean nears.

She leads him through the maze
Of all her waiting charms,
Nor yields her wonder ways
At once unto his arms;

THE MARSH

A lover wild the sea,
  A bride upon the shore—
Salt winds for certainty,
  And ebb-tide as before!

REVOLT

AS the sea to her rocks—that refuse her—
Cast her back on her desolate passion,
Repel her besieging caress, her hours
Of sinuous languor—my heart to thy
Feet, unwavering coast-guard of silence!
Faint in the ebb—from the outermost reef
How her surge lifts the threat of her thunder!
How she gathers her emerald powers
Of ocean, to batter the breakwater,—
That cuts her, and tears her,—her jewelled robe
Frayed; her green plumes betrayed of their glory.
Hurled to the floor of her dungeon—then up!
And with vengeance unsated, back to her
Cruel desire. Compelled by a craving
Unslaked,—known of two in the universe,—
Sea unto crag; my heart to its pleasure!
In the sensuous lull of the moonlight,
In the unyielding glare of the noontide,
In her desperate calms, as in tempest,
Stand her crags; mute, and ever withholding;
All unmoved by her hoarse protestation;
Restraining her never to brim on their
Bosom; resisting her ever—and yet
In her madness possessing her wholly—
As my heart is beset of thee, only!

A GOLDEN DAY

ALL art, all music that dreams obey,
Beckon me back to one golden day;
A golden day where memory swoons,
Captive between two sentinel moons.
A happier day I never knew—
'Tis mine as a prisoner in blue,
A hostage to swift invading pain,
A sunbeam lighting long nights of rain;
Like a brave prayer when I cannot pray
My heart turns back to that golden day—
When beauty exhaled a silent balm
Flooding love's restless heart with calm.
Your words and fancies, your voice and eyes,
Were part of the liquid Summer skies,
And every throb your life-blood told
Was set in quivering Autumn gold.
I saw 'twas singing itself away—
Wonderful, pitiless golden day;
I knew 'twas held by our bated breath,
Smiling the radiant smile of death;
Yet mine is a regal fate, I say,
Blind in the light of a golden day!

AN AUGUST AFTERNOON

SCARCE in her topmost branches Nature
breathes;
Brooding quiescent mysteries, her spent
Airs ripple leisurely through passive trees,
Whose tremulous leaves, in fervent freshness green,
Whisper their cool elusive subtleties,
As in and out her counsels wind their flight
Down bowered ways of sultry mist, on vague
And serious concerns of forestry.
Too languorous for smiles,—too faint for tears,—
Drenched in an aromatic memory
Of rainbow showers, passionate and past,
A lyric silence lies upon the hour;
A wide white silence; slumberous; becalmed:
As Earth's old step had faltered,—slowed to rest,—
Then pausing, ceased; hushed in her orbit's song.
Now is the August-hearted wafted soft
Within the drowsy grace of siren arms,
Where, as to seaward sailors, swaying pines
Stretch forth their plumy darkness unto him,
And murmur of a grotto drowned in sleep—
Beneath a cave whose tinted walls of shell
And wave-hid door are flooded o'er with dreams!

OUT OF THE NORTH

BLOW, ye dread gales! I beg thee, Winter, stay!
Henceforth the chosen fellow of my soul!
As vassals of my solitude, thy winds—
These hardy Norsemen of thy hostelry.
The dilly-dally Spring no kinsman more
Of mine—since Time hath lost the secret of
That seed, whose blossom was Love's miracle,
Whose fragrance was a full-blown madness sweet.
The traitor south wind blew it overseas
Mayhap, on airs of fickle blandishing;
Rough foemen I may send, to gather back
In wild tornado clans the scattered charm
Of gladder days—but rather would I dwell
Apart from all that once was passing dear;
Bleak voices of the sea my Summer bird;
The frozen moor by storm-wrack overcast,
My flowery lea; an ancient race of pines
My feudalty. A knight, disarmed by Life;
Within a moated personality!

MYSTERIES

WHEN afternoon's each shadow cleft
With golden liquor fills,
Is there a heartache in my breast
Or on the wistful hills?

Smitten with color as with death,
Were I thus stricken faint
Of Spring's desire and Fall's consent,
Save they for thee made plaint?

Or wert thou with us yet, dear Love,
With thy sweet spirit's stress
Would russet Autumn tinge her charm?
Her poignancy be less?

Parted, each leaf-strewn stream doth run
To thee! The day doth wait;
For thine own vivid sake become
A love-mood animate.

Green ways beyond their pasture-bars,
Aglow with absence dyes,
Appeal for haunting yesterdays
As unto homesick eyes.

MYSTERIES

When glories of the afternoon
  Compel the burning west,
Is there a rapture on the hills
  Or only in my breast?

When stars renew the faith of heaven
  And dreams lie far at sea,
Art thou within the hush of night
  Or in the soul of me?

DEVONSHIRE POPPIES

HERE, one peers lonely through a gate —
Pink-coated huntsman, pack astray;
There, turbaned courtiers of state
Are blurred in carnival array.
As scarlet acrobats they run
To vault the hedgerow's mystery,
Leaping fantastic in the sun,
A blaze of Nature's jugglery.
Like Highland troopers others pass,
With kilt of flame and tunic green —
Their bonnets blowing in the grass,
Their piper's skirl a lark unseen.
Will-o'-the-wisp of Summer noons,
They flit 'mid haymakers at rest,
And up the path of harvest moons,
Are lost o'er sunset's gleaming crest.

THE SONG OF THE CAMELLIA

AH, pity me — a flower dumb!
The lilac is of Quaker speech.
The flushing oleander from
Her foreign lips doth soft beseech;
The jasmine on the convent wall,
The pale arbutus forest-hid,
The novice lilies chaste and tall,
In fragrance speak — to me forbid.

The rose is love articulate,
The rustic pink doth spicy woo;
With purple eloquence innate
The violet doth each outdo.
The symbol of a heartless pride,
I lift my perfect waxen head,
While humble blossoms by my side
Their sweet allurements round me spread.

I feel my beauty glow and fade,
A matchless target for decay —
Yet without power was I made
To steal the heart away!

THE SONG OF THE CAMELLIA

'Neath showy bloom and glossy leaves,
Which arrogance so well become,
An Asiatic exile grieves;
Ah, pity me—a flower dumb!

DAWN AT VENICE

ONE burnished cloud first turned a jagged prow —
The waking water nestled deep among
Her murky gondolas, that bow on bow
Freighted with shadows at the molo swung.

Soon palace and canal paled into sight,
Fainting as watchers whose long vigil wanes;
Till Dawn's approach across the waves of night
Flushed the rose blood in sleeping Venice' veins.

Then up the dazzling steps that lead to God,
One radiant sunbeam and a lone white dove
Santa Maria's holy threshold trod,
A shrine of morning lit by Light and Love!

Loud warned the chime to mass o'er quay and home,
Calling soft flocks of doves to greet the day
'Mid sculptured saints and angels round the dome—
While market-women followed in to pray.

HIGH NOON

HERE where the faint breeze droops upon the grass,
Where Summer incense fills the air with pine,—
Upon the highest hillside, where the sun
Lifts Nature to himself,— I raise my shrine
To thee, High Noon!
In whose clear eyes, undimmed by doubt or tear
No secret shadow of the soul is good;
Others may dread thy burning judgment white —
For them be twilight altars in the wood;
To thee, High Noon,
Bare-breasted as a pagan I would come!
Test thou my heart—that proven, I may dare
Exult to shrive me in thy ritcless peace,
And sacramental faith eternal swear
To thee, High Noon!

PLIGHTING

ACROSS the forced abyss of Time, fair Day and
waiting Night have met
To stain their lips in sunset's loving-cup; whose
ravished sorcery
Spilled down the sky
Unheeded runs. Oh ageless lovers, athirst and
amorous yet!
We transient-hearted read the glowing legend of
thy constancy
With jealous eye.

AT CLOSE OF DAY

EARTH'S harmonies are blent in one,
At peace with song the drowsy birds;
Labor has earned and mirth has spent,
Nor longer graze the pastured herds.

Day dreams at last — the sun has gone,
Leaving the patient trees to stand
As sentinels of her regret,
Upon night's dusky border-land.

One golden gleam awakes the pool,
That startled lifts a blaze abroad —
To sink, as breaks in ecstasy
The high note of a closing chord.

O comrade season of the soul,
What sure repose thy silence hath!
Lull all the hollows, drown the heights
In thy deep glooms of aftermath.

NIGHTFALL

THE sun puts out his crimson light,
A hawk ascends her stairway steep;
From the near jungle of the night
I hear the padded tread of sleep!

JANUARY

WHEN Darkness spreads her sombre powers,
The Winter moon smiles cold and slow;
O restless heart, O gay Spring flowers,
How wears the night beneath the snow?

DIES ROSATIONIS

AS in Italian Summers, immemorial,
The Roman roses by the Roman populace
Were hailed, and eager bartered in the
market-place,—
Not for adornment of some pagan carnival,
Nor yet the toga's flowing fold, or favorite's
hair,
Nor sweet debauchery of reckless flowering,
But for the arid tomb's affectioned garlanding,
Whose lapsing inmates thrill again to human
care,—

For one brief day, may we who love the rose, the
last
Remembering children of the goldenest age,
Immortal longings of all vanished Junes
assuage,
And toss a crimson pall o'er Summers of the past!
Red as the life-blood of Caligula, long shed,
For one bright feast of memory, their fra-
grance be
As homage to Augustan noontides oversea,
Aurelian dawns — imperial sunsets, dead.

DIES ROSATIONIS

Day of the rose! Thy beauty-laden rites restore!
Lest in unbudded years, when my fond step is
stayed,
No cry of color shall escape the heavy shade
To rouse the perfumed deeps of this young June
once more!

MIDSUMMER

MIDSUMMER weariness doth cling to me —
The year hath wrought her dazzling
pageantry
And broodeth passive in satiety.
Wide calms of increase stay her restless wing,
As flight were but a pastime meet for days
Before the idle joy of ripening,
When stress of growth compelled the forest ways.

O'erspent with torrid bloom the garden burns,
Nor longer to the sun in trembling turns
Her faint-hued hopes; but in her glory spurns
Him as a rival! Well she hath forgot
How once shy perfumes wooed each passing
glance
And drooping blossoms prayed him tarry not —
Then yielded smiling to his sultry trance!

The meadowbrook hath lost her song; no more
The lusty freshet brawls from shore to shore,
Nor in strange elfin voices doth implore —
Command, beseech, or warn of coming woe;
Or call her leaping comrades from afar,
Or glad the thirsty cattle as they go,
So parched and low her tinkling accents are.

The grassy folk now lull the livelong night,
Rocking the silence — haply to requite
For choruses of birds too old to plight.
I know not when the red-robed cardinal
First 'mid the sedge and rank-grown rushes stood,
Nor at what hushed and measured interval
There fell an herby twilight through the wood;

Nor when upon the hills the flooding tide
Of Summer broke, as up their purple side
The hoary chestnuts, like surf flinging wide
Against a foreign shore, did first appear!
But now the goldenrod's gay heraldry
In stony pastures lifts a yellow cheer,
And heavy walks the grain upon the lea.

MIDSUMMER

Midsummer weariness doth cling to me —
  Beneath her fruitage brave the apple-tree
    Stoops with the burden of her dignity ;
Nor longer, as in days of budded bliss,
  Doth toss at pleasure of the vagrant wind,
Or covet keen the raindrop's jewelled kiss,
  Or Springtide wonder in her nestlings find.

Not yet, not yet the laggard gentian blue,
  That loveliest lingerer — ever true
    Unto her roadside tryst of hoar and dew !
Not yet the sobering of early eves ;
  The fireside joy, whose timely respite glows
With spirit of the Autumn and her sheaves ;
  Not yet the dusky grape or aught of those

Proclaiming harbingers ! The covert sign
  Of sap arrested, marks the solstice line ;
    The laugh of Summer now a smile benign.
But nowhere warns the shadow of the Fall,
  Though nowhere bides the busy seed-time blithe —
While imperceptible the omens crawl
  Between the distant sickle and the scythe.

The gleaming corn, in valiant lines arrayed,
  Hath yet no rust upon the shining blade
    Drawn bright against the sun ; and deep in shade
The green-voiced breath of soothing minstrelsy
  Doth ever coax and rustle, muse and sing —
While underneath all musky flattery
  The tasselled ear doth hint of harvesting !

MIDSUMMER

The water-lily bares her fragrant breast;
Across the cloudless sky from east to west
No mysteries are hid — no joy unguessed.
By day, like some bewildered Romany,
The crescent moon seeks out her evening trail;
The roadside gypsy sells her augury,
Nor does one looked-for token halt or fail.

Yet all unmoved we speed the step of life —
The tarnished pleasure and the loosened strife,
The garnered wisdom grave, or folly rife!
Midsummer weariness doth cling to me;
Only our love shall never wax nor wane —
Eternal pain, eternal ecstasy!
Earth's ebb and flow a mask of visions vain.

Ah, dreams of bloom and fecund sleep, ye lead
Beyond the pale of time; ere mortals heed,
Your beckoned beauties one by one recede!
Only our love shall all unchanging stand —
One fixèd star amid the circling spheres,
Within the rainbow that hath ever spanned
The heart of man and passing of the years.

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